2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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The abundance of land allows every one to have a court-yard of his own. In this the farmer keeps his cart and plough, the fisherman his boat. The buffaloes and oxen of the whole village are usually all together on a pasture-ground kept by some speculative individual, who charges a couple of rupees or so for feeding and looking after them. The care exercised is not very great. Heat and rain kill many of them, where, as is too frequently the case, no shelter is available; foot-and-mouth disease, and other epidemics, carry off great numbers, and finally, they are not at all averse to killing one another. Consequently the vultures are frequently to be seen on the trees round the village pasture-land. Besides his implements the house-owner has always in his yard a hand rice-mill. Husking paddy has become, near the big towns, quite a separate trade, and abundance of cleaned rice may be bought in the bazaars, but in the village every family husks its own rice, the grain being kept stored in a small granary in the yard. The milling is done by the women, and there are two processes in the operation. The mill consists of two wooden cylinders about two feet thick, the inner surfaces of both roughened in a simple way by the cutting of radii from their centres, the lines being about a quarter of an inch deep. The upper cylinder has a funnel-shaped hole cut through it, to let the grain down, and is worked backwards and forwards by a long pole loosely fastened in, the rice coming out between the two cylinders, and falling on mats down below. It is winnowed either in the primitive way of throwing it into the air, so that the light husk may be blown away, or, often nowadays in Lower Burma, by a hand-worked pair of fanners, introduced since the English occupation.

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The rice is not yet, however, ready for cooking. The inner pellicle has still to be removed, and this is done in a big wooden mortar. Two varieties are in use, worked either by hand, as an apothecary pounds his drugs, the pestle being very long and heavy; or by foot, when the wooden mortar is sunk in the ground. The pestle in this latter case consists of a short, stumpy piece of wood, let into a long lever near the end. This lever is supported on two uprights at some distance from the mortar, and the machine is worked by the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Europeans)AP1
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cable with men who have not yet fallen into the clutches of the chetties, and the result has been almost invariably to drive them into the money-lender's arms. The Burmese, it it is to be feared, have not sufficient stability of character. U Myaing or Maung Po never had so much money before in their lives as the advances figure to. They do not know the value of it, and proceed to squander the rupees forthwith; and so, long before the paddy is delivered they are heavily in the usurer's books, and then Maung Po and U Myaing have to do as they are bidden. Moreover, the system in any case could hardly be a safe one. The cultivator might die; there might be a flood or a jungle fire; many things might happen, in fact, to prevent the advance boats from ever reaching the Puzundaung creek. Consequently many English firms have given up the practice, and instead send agents away up the creeks, far into the jungle, to negotiate with the farmers on the spot and try to secure paddy before rivalry has had time to raise the price. But even this expedient does not answer well. The chetties do their best to throw obstacles in the way. It is not without expense, and it impresses the cultivators with a notion of the great demand there is for paddy.

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The telegraph, they say, ruins business. The paddy season opens in February with a price of, say between seventy and eighty rupees a hundred baskets. The merchants declare they will not be forced into materially increasing this rate, and the home firms charter a number of ships. Meanwhile the price of paddy steadily rises, while rice in England steadily goes down; and by the time the vessels discharge their cargo in Liverpool or London, milled rice is not very much dearer in wholesale shops than the raw paddy in the Burmese boats. New mills are constantly being started—which would seem contradictory, were it not that all the firms starting them have business of another kind; teak sawmills, cotton or piece-goods trade, silks for Burmese men and maidens, or jute and grey shirtings for Upper Burma and the hill tribes. Rice will certainly always be wanted, and there is any quantity of it to be had in Burma. A little more of the sterling probity which used to be associated with the name of the English merchant would

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Europeans) AP1
Indians
Burmese AP4

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do no harm in Rangoon rice dealings, and would win that respect from the farmer which heavy payments and cunning never will.

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Rangoon still continues to be the largest rice port in the world. From January to May the river is crowded with shipping—huge iron and steel sailing craft that have been chartered beforehand, and carry off thousands of bags in their capacious holds; and a constant succession of "ditchers," as the steamers passing through the Suez Canal are called, which come "seeking," and seldom have to go away without their full complement of "five parts cargo rice," or "Europe milled." The steamers are displacing the sailing ships, and the shorter passage now makes it possible to carry fully husked rice home without the danger of heating, which was supposed to be avoided by the partly husked "five parts cargo rice." Harbour-masters and river-pilots have a busy time, and gather together many pieces of silver against the later months of the year, when they will have abundant leisure to spend them. Coringi coolies swarm in the town, and their monotonous chant, "Eh-ya-mah-la Tah-ma-lay, Madras Ag-boat Tah-ma-lay," may be heard at any hour of the night or the morning, floating over the river. The British sailor overflows into the town and sings noisy old salt sea-songs round about the Sule pagoda, gets mad drunk on arrack, and not unseldom clears Dalhousie Street with a linked-arm rush, heedless of the red-turbaned guardian of the peace, who keeps out of the way in the meantime, but will break poor drunken Jack's head with his truncheon if he finds him helpless and strayed from his fellow-roysterers.

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The Puzundaung Creek, where all the mills are, is as busy as an ant-hill all day long, and all night too, when some of the mills are lighted up with Jablochkoffs or later forms of electric light, and the silvery rays shine ghastly on the black and bronzed mill-workers. Here we have the Madrasi coolies again, making noises, according to their nature, as a kind of assertion that they are doing hard work. The lank Chittagonian firemen, with their aquiline noses, are coated with coal-dust, and divide their time between firing up and having a whiff at the hubble-bubble when Sandy,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Europeans Chinese) AP1
Burmese AP4

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the Scotch engineer, is not looking. There is a cluster of Chinese carpenters, chipping away with their queer thick-headed axes and planes, which, with characteristic perversity, they pull towards them, instead of pushing away as other workmen do. Here is M——, the English "assistant" at the mill, his hat and coat all covered with rice-dust, which hangs in queer fashion on his eyebrows and moustache. He is in high spirits. "We've got twenty-four pair of stones going to-day, more than anybody else in the creek;" and he goes off to see how the Burmese girls are stitching up the rice-bags, a duty of which he is particularly fond, and over which he spends a quite unnecessary amount of time. There is R——'s voice on the other side of the creek. He is storming at some men in the cargo-boat, who have done something wrong—anchored in the wrong place, or not started for the upper mill at Kemendine last night as they ought to have done. R—— has a voice which is the terror of every loitering coolie and dawdling boat-wallah in his employ; and he will be as hoarse as a North Sea pilot by nightfall, and will want a "double-barrelled" whisky and soda to moisten him before dinner. He wants company down to "the Point," and presently comes skimming across in his gig, manned by Chittagonian Kalassies, and we drop down the creek—they call small rivers creeks in the East—to where it joins with the main Rangoon stream. The Pegu river, tapping the country north-east and north of Rangoon, comes in at the same place; and there is a great crowd of paddy-boats here in the early morning. Each firm has its brokers, middlemen who make the purchases from the farmers that come down with their grain. They have been here since daylight, and fly about in their little dug-outs from one seller to another. The great point in a broker seems to be power of lungs and fluency in abuse. The amount of yelling that goes on at "Monkey Point" would silence the bookmakers' ring at Epsom on a Derby day.

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R—— has not come down to this pandemonium for nothing. There are a couple of big ships in, which must be filled, or there will be demurrage to pay, and a "canal-wallah" is expected this afternoon or to-morrow morning; so that the wheels must be kept going their hardest.

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

000 Accordingly, we paddle about here and there, and whenever we come across the little canoe flying the flag that marks R——'s brokers, sundry signs pass, which result in three great paddy-boats mounting the red flag too. They presently weigh anchor, and drop up to the mill. R—— is a smart man of business, and is very scornful about the representatives of several other firms, who lounge on the bank, smoking cheroots, and throwing sticks into the water for their dogs to fetch out. It is not directly a matter of money that is in question. The cultivators know pretty well what they are about, though you might not think it when you hear a man refuse ninety-two rupees a hundred baskets, and afterwards settle with a broker for eighty-eight. Those passes with the finger on the nose meant a good deal more than appeared. Another brick in the bottom of the basket, a three-inch batten wedged in somewhere, was the significance of that wink which sent the broker off in such a hurry.

000 At last it is over. There are no more boats to be had; and we are not sorry to turn back, for the sun throws its beams fiercely back from the water in a way that gets below the broadest solah hat. R—— is in great glee: "Thirteen boats, by George! Next best to the Imperial Firm; and then there's the launch to come back." The Imperial Firm is the biggest concern in Rangoon, and has sometimes as much as a lakh out for "advance boats," *i.e.* money paid to cultivators before the rice has been planted out from the nurseries, or perhaps even before it has been sown at all. The launch about which R—— is so solicitous went away last night far up the Pegu River to intercept boats coming down with paddy for sale. There are sometimes great bargains to be made in this way. The boatmen have come a long distance, and are tired with paddling. The tide is making strong when the steam-launch comes up. There is the welcome prospect of an end to their labours, and above all there are no outbidding rivals to interfere. R—— instituted the system, and for a day or two had the game all to himself; but now the other firms have got wind of it, and there are sometimes famous races for a big boat, which must somewhat astonish the simple jungle wallahs, and certainly do not reduce the demands of the hleshin, the owner of the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

boat. R—— is in luck this morning. We have hardly gone a hundred yards when the "Mah Hlah" comes puffing round the point behind us, with a boat on either side, and three towing astern.

And now we have got back to the mill. The Burmans are discharging their paddy, which is stowed in bulk, into a big cargo boat. The regulation basket is in use, and we do not peer too inquisitively into the bottom of it. The owner of the boat is perched on the lofty carved stern of his craft, and placidly smokes a great cheroot. Presently he will come down and make his way to the office, where he will get a great pile of rupees to carry off, tied in the end of his paso. The greater number of them will probably find their way into the hands of the oily chetty, who is squatting on the bank there. The rest our hleshin will most likely gamble away.

Meanwhile, a long string of coolies is carrying the paddy from the lighter into the godown, a gigantic shed, where there is already a mountain of grain. We skirt round it, and go to the other side. There a few hundred more coolies are running off with more baskets to the mill. The paddy is thrown into huge receptacles on the basement, winnowed, carried up in lifts to the top of the house, three stories high, where it is first of all passed over a long sieve. Here the stalks, leaves, stones, and stumps of cheroots are separated from the grain, which is then passed between two revolving stones, just sufficiently wide apart to grind off the outer husk without breaking the seed. Then it is rewinnowed in fanners, and passed over finer sieves, where the broken grains fall through, while the part-cleaned rice goes on to fresh stones. It is found that perfectly clean rice will not stand the long sea voyage, and the grain as it is sent in the sailing ship has still the inner pellicle, and is mixed with about twenty per cent of unhusked rice. This is what is technically known as "five parts cargo rice," or simply "cargo rice." Since so many steamers have begun to go through the Suez Canal, the amount of "white rice" milled in the province has been steadily increasing. Rice of a specially fine quality, with a glaze on the surface, is manufactured for Italy. Clouds of rice-dust float all over the mill, and settle every-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Chinese) AP1
Burmese AP4

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where, making queer spectacles of the dark-skinned Madrasis. The dust is carefully swept up and sold to Chinamen, who fatten their pigs upon it. The milled grain descends to the ground-floor again, and pours in a stream through shoots into bags standing ready on weighing machines. There is a crowd of Burmese girls ready to sew them up as they are filled, and another band of coolies to carry them off in the cargo boats ready to convey them to the ships away up in the Rangoon harbour. Paddy that came in a Burmese boat in the morning may by night be safe stowed in the shape of milled rice deep down in the hold of a ship bound "to the Channel for orders." Everything is used but the paddy husk. That is passed out from the fanners, and pours in a great stream from wooden shoots into the creek. There it floats backwards and forwards with the tide, and creates miasma and narrows the river; still no other feasible means of getting rid of it has yet been devised. Several engineers and others in Rangoon have tried special furnaces for consuming the husk, but with no very great measure of success. Mr. Cowie's system is probably the best; but it requires a special kind of boiler and furnace, and has not as yet been generally adopted. The economy in fuel as well as the advantage to the river would be immense if the scheme were perfected.

And so we have seen the paddy sown out and mown, and passing from the hands of the cultivators, through the mills, into the great ships that carry the rice away to all parts of the world.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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191. BRICK MAKERS P. 97

CHAPTER V

TRADES AND PROFESSIONS

463 Most artizans in the rural settlements are cultivators as well, plying their special trade in the by-season. The [256] home industries continue to be practised in the seaport towns, where certain of them, such as rice-cleaning, are conducted wholesale (No. 184). The largest plant used in [388] the country villages is the oil-mill (*sizôn*). The cooking-[252] oil of Burma is pressed from the seed of sesamum (*hnan*), a black grain resembling [402] rape. It is not so delicate as olive oil, but is used for adulterating the latter. Oil-cake is used for fodder. The mill consists of a great mortar made of the 000 trunk of some hard-timbered tree with a pestle of the same. *Hnan* is grown as

192. OIL-MILL

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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Hnam is grown as a secondary crop in the hills, a dry-weather crop in the *kwin*, and a full crop in the dry zone. The care of the *tári* palm, the planting and milling of sugar-cane, the care of orchards and the raising of vegetables are occupations of a special kind. The *tan* and *pe* palms, which yield the palm-wine or juice, propagate naturally. The *tan* grows about a foot a year, and attains a height of eighty to a hundred feet (No. 167). It fruits at fifteen to twenty years. *Tan* palms are common on the temple-lands and other well-drained and uncultivated clearings. The curved flower-stalks of the *tan* are cut through, and to their stumps earthen pots are slung to receive the juice that exudes. A gallon or more is collected from a tree in twenty-four hours. Palm-juice is also obtained from the *pe*, the dried leaves of which are used for writing on. The tree takes about fifty years to mature; then it flowers for the first time, fruits and dies; its gigantic head of bloom is cut off at the base and the juice flows for some months. The *dani* palm is tapped in the same way as the *tan*. Fresh juice of all three palms is sweet, and before fermentation sets in, it may be drunk even by the *yahdn*. When boiled fresh, the juice yields a sugar (*tanmyét*). The collecting pots are boiled out daily, by which the yeast that forms is destroyed. This boiling is omitted when the liquor is intended for a beverage. In that case a decoction of the nut of *pangé* or other astringent is added, which helps to arrest fermentation at the vinous stage. Otherwise, acid fermentation is complete within twenty-four hours. Fer-

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183. PE AND TAN PALMS.

184. CLEANING RICE WHOLESALE (P. 155).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

At intervals on the main lines of traffic are refreshment-booths, where fruit, sweetmeats, and tea are sold. Meals can be taken in the markets of the towns. In the villages casual travellers enjoy the hospitality of the people. In the afternoon the markets are closed; low tables are set in the roads, where cheroots, fruit, and sweetmeats are sold in the evening. Some of these refreshments are prepared on the spot, such as the *mônlebwè*, a wafer baked in the flame of a fire, in which it rises to an immense size.

292. CLOTH BAZAR.

The wholesale trade of Burma is conducted by brokers (*pwèza*) who receive a commission. Wealthy men operate with their own capital, others find investors and money-lenders to advance funds, some form partnerships and small companies to divide profits. Producers frequently bring their grain direct to the mills; but the bulk of the grain is bought up by the native brokers to the order of the exporters, most of whom never visit the interior. The interest on money is one to six per cent. per mensem. What is not hoarded in the form of plate and ornaments is put into trade or is put out to interest. Money-lending is not a special business because everybody practises it. Appalling as is the rate of interest—the measure of risk—such hard bargains are not driven as in India. Debtors when sold up can nowhere make a new start so well as in Burma. Brokers do banking in a small way; but banking has been made a regular branch of business by the Chettis from India (No. 364), who pay as much as one per cent. per month on deposits and charge one and a half per cent. on loans fully secured. European banks and investments with their high security and low rates of interest do not attract Burman capital.

293. NIGHT BAZAR.

The carrying business is mainly by water, for which Burma possesses unrivalled facilities, especially in the floods